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Your ref: HL73687/ASG/par
Applicati n No: GB 9926450.9
Applicant: Shell International Research Maatschappij

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Tel: 01633 813797
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Patents Act 1977
Examination Report under Section 18(3)

Novelty

1. The invention as defined in claim 6 is not new because it has already been disclosed in each of the following documents:

WO 92/08875 A (FRAMO) see esp. figures 1 and 2
US 5375661 (DANESHY) see esp. figure and col. 4 lines 36-50

Inventive step

2. The invention as defined in claims 1-5, 7-8 is obvious in view of what has already been disclosed in the following documents:

WO 92/08875 A
US 5375661
US 5337808 (GRAHAM) see esp. figure 2 and col. 5 lines 5-8

WO '875 and US '661 disclose the features of claims 1-5 other than the coupling of a shoe to one of the slotted tubular members. US '808 discloses the use of a shoe at the end of the assembly in a similar multizone completion. The use of shoes in well assemblies in general is commonplace and it would be obvious to someone skilled in the art to combine the documents.

WO '875 and US '661 disclose the features of claims 7 and 8 other than the fluidic coupling of the primary solid tubulars with the casing. US '808 discloses the fluidic coupling of the tubular assembly to the casing.

Clarity/support

3. Claim 1 (and hence claim 5) is inconsistent with the description through the breadth of the claim, through the use of the phrase 'an apparatus' where the description at page 1 discloses the invention as relating to oil and gas exploration in some form.

4. Claim 1 (and hence claims 5, 6, and 7) is unclear through the use of phrases at odds with each other:

'One or more' compared with 'each'; 'the solid tubular members' compared with 'one or more'; 'the slotted tubular members' compared with 'one or more'.



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[Examination Report contd.]

5. Claim 5 is unclear through the use of an undefined variable n. For the wording of the claim to have any substance then n must be at least 2.
6. Claim 7 is not fully-supported by the description since the consistory clause at page 2 lines 9-17 does not correspond, omitting reference to 'fluidicly coupling the slotted tubulars with the solid tubulars'.
7. The scope of the claims is rendered unclear by the description at page 3 line 25 and page 4 line 26 through the use of the phrase 'preferably' in relation to features that appear in the independent claims and hence are essential features.
8. The opening paragraph at page 1 is obscure and should be deleted.